Dragon Knights
TOKYOPOP
Mineko Ohkami
23

The action picks up as Gil and his band of warriors move through the dragon castle, where they are searching for a mysterious treasure. Meanwhile, Kahaku (the water dragon) needs Saabel for some unspoken task–that may snare the infamous Dragon Emperor!

"An epic tale that any lover of fantasy can become addicted to."

–Sheene McNeil,
Sequential Tart

ドラゴン騎士団。23

DRAGON KNIGHTS 23

押上美猫

Mineko Ohkami

Dragon Knights

Written and Illustrated by
Mineko Ohkami

Volume 23

TOKYOPOP

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

THE DRAGON LORD & THE DEMON LORD:

A HISTORY OF THE BATTLE TO CONTROL DUSIS

AS PENNED BY

CERNOZURA

CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OF THE

PEACE CASTLE IN THE HEART OF DEATH'S

The Keeper of the Tome

My name is Cernozure and I am the chief administrator for the Dragon castle, Draqueen in the heart of Dragoon the Dragon Kingdom. Within these pages I will attempt to chronicle the events of yesteryear in the hopes that it will, in turn offer some future understanding of the chaos that currently befalls us. I feel it's imperative that I record a comprehensive history of the events that have led us this dark hour for I fear that none will remain to tell the tale. My only hope is that this tome may survive so that future generations will know of the valiance of the Dragon Tribe.

Rise of the Demon Lord

Our worst fears have come to pass. The Demon Lord Nadil has been resurrected, and he has stolen from the bosom of our care the fortuneteller Cesta, who harbors an incredible magic that we have only just begun to witness. In the service of a villain as pernicious as Nadil, Cesta, whether against her will or willingly giving in to the seductive charm of the dreaded Demon Lord, may prove to be the most dangerous threat we've faced.

Into the Abyss

The Dragon Knights have been dispatched to Rainadelle, the kingdom of the Demon Lord, charged with rescuing Cesta. While their journey was not without its share of peril, all three Knights have at last gained entry to Nadil's castle, an ominous-looking fortress that rests atop a dead island surrounded by an ocean of souls. And remarkably, they were not the only ones.

In addition to the thousands of demons that swear allegiance to Nadil, there is at least one who doesn't. Zumo, the small, winged demon, has long been a companion of Cesta. Attempting to bring her the powerful wind staff that was bequeathed to us by the Star Princess, Zumo has joined with Ritchel, a thief who has proven herself to be a loyal ally to Lykouleon, Kingleys Ritchel's foerin companion, and Tintlet, Rene's beloved. They, too, have gained entrance to Nadil's palace, and word has reached our forces that they have joined forces with the Dragon Knights.

It seems our heroes need whatever help they can accure as all three Knights have been captured and are now imprisoned in Nodil's trunk dungeon. The prison is Kamelda is known to be inescapable and it is particularly deadly for Dragon Clan. It is surrounded by the Sea of the Dead-a vast mass of damned souls each desiring a living body to possess. It is to this abominable hole that Theez and Rune are currently strapped in Rath, however, currently suffers in solitude in a hell of a different sort. It has been revealed that the Demon Lord shares a dark bond with the Dragon Knight of Fire. It's a connection that has taken root within their very souls, and it appears that nothing can be done to lift it.

Meanwhile Lim attempts to get the Water of Change from Leela and discovers that their powers are actually [redacted]. It is during their subsequent fight that it is revealed that Leela is the Water of Change...and that that Water of Change is actually tears not water. As Zoma searches for Cesia he recalls Rath offering him more power by uniting his essence with that of a bird within Rath's body. Rath also suggests that Zoma be his replacement so that he and the Dragon Clan can be free. Zoma finds Cesia in her dark form, but her goodness manages to fight through and regain control over her body. Zoma shape-shifts into a large bird, and, with Cesia on his back, plunges into the Sea of the Dead. It is there that Cesia is reunited with the chain-bound Rath. She frees him from bondage, but countless battles against all manners of demons have taken a toll upon his flesh.

If the Dragon Realm is to find victory against the demon horde that has plagued it for centuries, Rath must sacrifice his very life. Cesia vows to find Rath's spirit a corporeal body and uses the Sacred Dragon Eye to transport her and the Knights to the western continent of Dusic. There, Bertrez, Nodil and Gil, once occupants of Rath's body, try to make sense of their existence. Gil in particular travels to Dragon Castle solely to find out once and for all if his memories are false or real. But when an "acquaintance" from the past mysteriously appears before Bertrez and Gil, it places not only their mission, but their very lives in jeopardy.

The Heroes of Dragon Knights

Lord Lykouleon

The beloved Dragon Lord, Lykouleon is the sovereign ruler of Dragonia. The namesake of the Dragon Clan and the knight of the Dragon Army are at his command.

Lady Raseleane

Lykouleon's queen, the Lady Raseleane was rendered barren by the Demon Lord and unable to provide Lykouleon with an heir.

Dragon Officers

Commanding the power of the five Dragon Gods, the Dragon Officers should number five strong, but after the Demon Army's assault on Dragonia, only three officers remain.

Ruwalk

The Yellow Dragon Officer and Secretary of State.

Tetheus

The Black Dragon Officer and Secretary of Security.

Cernozura

The Dragon Castle Administrator, Cernozura is also a self-appointed castle historian.

Dragon Knights

Rath

The Dragon Knight of Fire, Rath is part Hoss and lives for killing demons.

Thatz

The Dragon Knight of Earth, the human Thatz was once a thief, and his love for gold hasn't ceased.

Rune

The Dragon Knight of Water. Rune is an elf and has abilities the other four Dragon Knights lack.

Other Allies

Cesia

A half-demon fortuneteller with the ability to enhance the power of Rune or Rune proximity to her.

Zemo

Cesia's demon friend and companion.

Entiet

A Rune who has said Rune much for her beloved Rune and her dying race.

Kirchel

Another Red lover to Lykouleon, Kirchel possesses the powerful Three Treasures and is trying to get Rune to firmware.

Ringleys

A Rune who was rescued from a demon and now accompanies Kirchel.

Delte

Lykouleon's Rune lieutenants.

Star Princess

Not much is known about this powerful princess, but she has appeared Rune on several occasions.

Goldfish

The Star Princess's bodyguard. Both the Princess and Goldfish seem to be friendly to Lykouleon's cause.

Nohiro

A human on a mission to save the dying Rune race. Has assisted Rune in the past.

The Villains of Dragon Knights

Nacht

The evil and justly feared Demon Lord. Nacht was once slain by the Dragon Lord, but his body was recently retrieved and resurrected by his loyal army. Now he once again presides over the Demon Realm, hungry for revenge.

Demon Officers

Shydeman

One of Nacht's generals, Shydeman led the successful attack on Dragonia that brought back the Demon Lord.

Shyrendora

Another general, Shyrendora is close to Shydeman and also to Tethlus, who fights against her as one of the Dragon Officers.

Fedelta

Answering directly to Shydeman, Fedelta has become one of the most vicious officers in the Demon Army.

Lady Medienea

Another officer in Nacht's army, Medienea has an ongoing rivalry with Fedelta.

Other Enemies

Dierrez

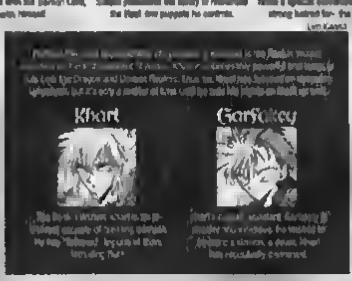
The infamous rogue demon, Dierrez's loyalties lie not with the Demon Lord, but with himself.

Saabel

The so-called 'Collector of Corpses,' Saabel possesses the ability to reanimate the dead and puppets his victims.

Leelu Reel

Small and powerful, Leelu Reel holds a special connection with—and strong hatred for—the reformed Lyn Kashi.



DUSIS
HYURAU
GLACIOSA
KAINALDIA
MEMPHIS
HERMOSA
KUULTA
DRAGOON
N
ARINAS

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DRAGON KNIGHT'S

ドラゴン騎士団

A World Away

SOUNDS LIKE THE WALLS ARE TUMBLING DOWN!
IT'S THE PILLARS...!
...!!
COME ON!
LET'S HEAD TO THE BASEMENT!
NOT A GOOD SIGN ...!
HUH?
IT STOPPED?!

HAS HE LOST HIS MIND?!
HE'S MAD BECAUSE I'VE STOLEN HIS PREY.
UGH ...

HOW CAN I HELP HIM?
I'M NOT HIS PREY.
...
WHAT?
I THOUGHT YOU LOOKED STRANGE.
NOW I KNOW WHY.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT HIM.

YOU'RE A FAKE.
YOU'RE NOT LAAMU GARNAS.

LAAMU
GARNAS!!

UGH ...
GI--
GIL...
UNH ...!
LAAMU GARNAS ...
COME HERE.

YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK ME!
HUH?

DEMONS ...
THEY HAVE NO MANNERS.
THIS IS A CASTLE, FOR GOODNESS' SAKES.
THEY SHOULD TAKE THE FIGHT OUTSIDE.
GIL!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO SAVE HIM!

!!
CAPTAIN?!
RING-LEYS ...
WAIT!!
HUH?
LAAMU CARNAS ...!!
WHAT?
IS HE THE DRAGON CAPTAIN?

WHOA...!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE CASTLE IS COMING DOWN!

WELL, WELL, WELL... WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?
WHO KNEW THIS PLACE CONCEALED SO MANY INTERESTING THINGS?
CARABA FOUND A SECRET WAY INTO THE CASTLE.
FOLLOW ME!
CAPTAIN!

.....
GO DOWNSTAIRS AND TELL THEM WHAT'S GOING ON.
NOISY BASTARD.

I CAN'T TELL.
ITS TOO FOGGY.
.....
.....
HEY GIL
ISN'T THAT GUY YOUR FRIEND?
OH YEAH ...

THAT MUST BE IT.
I CAN FEEL IT!
THEN I BET SHYRENDORA CLOUDED UP HIS HEART AND EYES.
SHYDEMAN PROBABLY TOOK LAAMU GARNAS SOUL AND TURNED HIM INTO A MONSTER.
...THAT BEAST IS LAAMU GARNAS.
I'M POSITIVE.
BUT HIS POWER IS LEAKING OUT FROM HIS WOUND.
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
ITS AN ILLUSION CREATED BY SHYDEMAN. IT'S AN EMPTY SHELL WITH THE SAME VOICE.
SO THEN, HE'S A FAKE?!

WHAT DO I DO?
SHOULD I GO AHEAD AND KILL HIM?
OR IS THIS ONE OF SHYDEMAN AND NADIL'S TRICKS?
HEY.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HERE.
OH, GREAT.
HEY YOU.
DON'T WORK TOO HARD.
WHOA!
!!

I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE!
GAR-ABA.
LET'S GO DOWN THERE.
THIS IS INSANE...!

SO THIS IS THE UNDERWORLD!

DIDN'T I JUST SAY I WAS GOING DOWN THERE?
THAT'S JUST GREAT.
THAT USELESS BEAST SHOWED ME UP.

THIS IS AWFUL!
AT THIS RATE, THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT OF THE CASTLE!
KI
IXI

NOW, LET'S SEE...
WHAT KIND OF SKELETONS ARE THEY HIDING IN THEIR BASEMENT?
GET HIM!!
MY, MY...IS THAT ANY WAY TO WELCOME A GUEST?
DESPERATION IS SO UNBECOMING.

IF THIS IS YOUR WAY OF DETERRING ME, IT ISN'T WORKING.
NOW I'M MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO SEE WHAT'S IN THAT BASEMENT!
OOPSIES...!

THAT WAS CLOSE.
I THOUGHT I WAS A GONER.
YOU ALMOST WERE.
!!
THE EARTH JUST STARTED QUAKING ...
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN EARTHQUAKE.
I HEAR WATER.

IT'S COMING FROM ABOVE US.
YOU HEAR WATER? LIKE SPLASHING?
DO YOU THINK THE WATER DRAGON IS HERE?
DID A DAM BREAK? ARE WE FLOODING? OR MAYBE THIS PLACE IS BELOW SEA LEVEL AND...
QUIT YOUR YAMMERING AND LET'S GET A MOVE ON!
THANK GOODNESS I FOUND YOU GUYS!
IT'S BAD! COME QUICK!
THE ENEMY'S INFILTRATED THE CASTLE!
THERE'S SOME GUY WHO RIDES A GOLDEN FISH!

WHAT?!
YOU MEAN LIKE A GOLDFISH?
WAIT A MINUTE...I KNOW WHAT FISH YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
The titular guy's appearing and I absolutely must him.
WHERE'S RINGLEYS WHEN YOU NEED HIM? THIS IS SOMETHING HE'S GOTTA SEE!
SHOOT!
COME ON, WE GOTTA HURRY.
IF THIS IS WHO WE THINK IT IS, THEN WE'RE IN A WHOLE LOT OF TROUBLE.
YOU GO AHEAD. I HAVE TO WARN THE OTHERS!
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE GUY WHO'S INSANE ENOUGH TO RIDE THAT FLASHY FISH...
IT'S GARABA.

.....
DELTE!

TINTLET?!

WHAT'S THE STATUS OF THE MESSENGER?
YES, HE'S LEFT ALREADY.
WE NEED TO WARN THE OTHERS.
I WANT HALF OF YOU TO COME WITH ME.
THE REST OF YOU ARE TO LEAVE THROUGH THE ENTRANCE.

THAT'S RIGHT!
COME AND GET ME!
COULD IT BE...
...THAT THE DRAGON LORD IS DOWN THERE?
THIS IS SO EXCITING!
DON'T YOU AGREE, GARABA?

UH ...
GIL?
ALL THE OFFICERS ARE GONE!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
!
GIL...

DEMONS ARE GOOD FOR NOTHING!
WHOOPS.
SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND YOU.

I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU.
BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THEY TOOK MY SOUL.
WAIT...
WHAT'S THIS?

THAT MONSTER IS WHAT'S LEFT OF ME.
THE SOUL OF A MON-STER.
SHY-DEMAN... HE...
TOOK MY SOUL FROM MY BODY.
SHUT UP! I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAY.

SHY-DEMAN?
HE DID ALL THIS?
HE WAS THE ONE WHO TURNED YOUR FRIEND INTO A BLACK DEMON...
IT WAS HE WHO WAS TALKING TO YOU.
YES. SHYDEMAN KILLED LAAMU GARNAS.

LAAMU GARNAS WAS THE DEMON WHO SAVED ME.
HE TRIED TO PROTECT ME FROM SHYDEMAN AND WOUND UP GETTING KILLED.
LAAMU GARNAS MEANS "BLACK THUNDER."
HE WAS A DEMON WORKING FOR SHY-DEMAN.
HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RUN AWAY... AND THAT HE WAS A ROGUE DEMON.
BUT, ON SECOND THOUGHT ...

LAAMU GARNAS ...
...HE WAS TRYING TO SEND YOU A MESSAGE.
ビリ
?!
THAT WAS PROBABLY A LIE, TOO.
IT WAS ALL PART OF SHYDEMAN'S PLANS.
AND I WAS FOOLED.
BUT IT WASN'T A MESSAGE COMPOSED OF WORDS.
IT WAS A MESSAGE OF DEATH.
I WAS ABLE TO SENSE IT, BECAUSE IT WAS SO STRONG.
DELTE!

I AM THE DRAGON QUEEN'S FORTUNE-TELLER.
MY NAME IS DELTE.

I WONDER IF HE'S ALREADY LEFT.
THE DRAGON KNIGHT WHO WAS ONCE A DEMON...
YOU MEAN...
...THE BLACK DEMON?

I DON'T SENSE MUCH DEMON POWER LEFT IN YOU.
NO. MY MISTAKE. WHAT I MEANT WAS THE DEMON WHO USED TO BE A DRAGON KNIGHT.
...YOUR DRAGON HAS BEEN HURT.
AND FURTHERMORE...
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALMOST COMPLETELY HEALED.
WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?
ARE YOU TRYING TO INTIMIDATE ME?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, GIL!
YOU CAN TRUST DELTE. SHE'S ALSO A FAERIE.

A FAERIE?
YEAH.
JUST LIKE ME.
BUT SHE'S BIGGER THAN YOU AND DOESN'T HAVE ANY WINGS.
OH, THAT?
THAT DOESN'T MEAN A THING. BOTH TINTLET AND LIM KAANA ARE FAERIES, TOO! BUT KITCHEL ISN'T!
DID I HAVE IT WRONG?
...equals Tintlet.
THIS ...
...equals Kitchel.
THAT ...
Lim Kaana. equals...
OH, AND I ALMOST FORGOT!
THERE'S RUNE, TOO! ALTHOUGH, I DON'T KNOW IF HE HAS HIS FAERIE POWERS ANYMORE.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S STILL TECHNICALLY A FAERIE.
MAYBE HE'S ONE OF THE DRAGON CLAN, NOW.
RUNE'S FAERIE POWER...

...AND WHENEVER A FAERIE IS BORN THERE...
...
SOMETHING SPARKLING
...
WHAT IS IT EXACTLY?
OH, YOU MEAN THE POWER OF VIRTUE?
IT'S THIS SPECIAL THING THAT ONLY FAERIES HAVE. YOU SEE, AT THE EDGE OF THE FAERIE FOREST IS A WATER WORLD...
I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU...
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ALL THIS.
DARN! AND IT'S SUCH A GOOD STORY, TOO!
...

ARE YOU GOING TO SUMMON HIM HERE?
REALLY?
LET WHO TELL WHAT?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN. I'LL LET HIM TELL YOU HIMSELF.
WELL, IT ISN'T A MESSAGE EXACTLY.
IT'S MORE LIKE A FAVOR.
A MESSAGE OF SORTS.
WHAT IS IT?

LONG AGO, WE WERE TOGETHER FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
BUT SINCE I'VE DIED, WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO BE REUNITED.

COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD YOUR HUMAN VOICE.
IT'S SO UNLIKE YOUR BEASTLY ANIMAL CRY, GIL.
LAAMU GARNAS?!
YOU'RE RIGHT.

IS HE REAL...?!
BACK THEN, YOU COULDN'T EVEN SPEAK WORDS...
REMEMBER?
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW.

YES. HE IS A DEMON.
...!!
...?!
ISN'T HE THAT DEMON WHO DIED? I SENSE DEMON POWER!
.....
WELL...
DOES THIS MEAN YOU'RE ALIVE?
I CROSSED OVER FOR A VISIT. I HAD SOME THINGS I NEEDED TO SETTLE.
I MISSED MY PET CAT.
YOUR PET...
HE'S GONE
HMM...I SUPPOSE I WAS.
I couldn't sense. anyone at all.
PLUS I MISSED THE FOOD.

IF I DIDN'T PICK YOU UP AND TAKE YOU WITH ME...
...YOU WOULD HAVE STARVED TO DEATH.
LOOK ...
LAAMU GARNAS ...
SO YOU'RE GOING TO BE STICKING AROUND, THEN?
HM?
.....
YOU KNOW...
.....
...I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU SAY MY NAME BEFORE.

ME...
MEOW.
.....
SAY IT AGAIN.
I LIKE THE WAY IT SOUNDS.
REALLY, I DO.
...THAT TURNED HIM INTO AN ANIMAL.
IT'S PROBABLY LEFT OVER FROM THE SPELL...
DID HE JUST...
...MEOW?
I'LL BE LEAVING AGAIN. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT WITH THAT?
THE MOMENT'S PASSED.
I DON'T FEEL LIKE SAYING IT ANYMORE.

!!
...
LAAMU GARNAS...

IT WASN'T A TRICK.
I WASN'T AN ILLUSION.
I HATE WORKING FOR NAJA.
...SO I RAN AWAY.
THAT'S WHEN I MET YOU. I LIKED BEING WITH YOU.
LAAMU CARNAS..
IS HE REALLY LEAVING AGAIN?
BUT UNFORTUNATELY SHYDEMAN KNEW ABOUT EVERYTHING IN THE END.
HE USED ME, BODY AND SOUL.
HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S FADING AWAY...

I FAILED AS YOUR GUARDIAN.
I AM SORRY...
YOU WAITED FOR ME...
THE SUMMONING SPELL IS REACHING ITS LIMIT.
MY DEEPEST REGRET IS THAT WE CAN'T BE TOGETHER.

SHYDEMAN AND SHYRENDORA POSSESS MY SOUL.
IF I WERE ALIVE HERE AGAIN, THEY WOULD ONLY MANIPULATE ME ONCE MORE.
WAIT!
HE'S GONE!
HIS SOUL IS GONE.
LAAMU GARNAS!

WE MAY MEET AGAIN...
...ON THE OTHER SIDE.
BUT FOR NOW YOU MUST LIVE ON.
.....

YOUR MEMORIES OF US...
...WERE REAL. HOLD ON TO THEM.
DO NOT DOUBT YOURSELF

HE'S GONE.
THE BLACK DEMON ...
THEY LOCKED UP HIS SOUL AND SEALED HIM IN BLACK ARMOR. THEY USED HIM TO POWER THEIR MONSTER.
THAT'S RIGHT.
JUST KNOWING THAT YOU WILL LIVE ON..
...BRINGS ME SUCH JOY. I AM TRULY GRATEFUL.
A SIGNAL OF DEATH. A MESSAGE WITHOUT WORDS...
I UNDERSTOOD IT.
TO BE MANIPULATED AGAIN AND AGAIN...
HOW UN-BEAR-ABLE ...

I HAVE AN IDEA!
LIGHT WATER HAS THE ABILITY TO PURIFY AND REVIVE.
GIL!
I JUST NEED A FEW MORE INGREDIENTS ...!
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET IT TO WORK!
I CAN USE IT TO HELP YOU RECOVER YOUR MEMORIES.
I'M GONNA MAKE YOU ALL BETTER. I PROMISE!
AT LEAST, I THINK THAT'S WHAT IT'S CALLED.
... MIST AND SLEEP POWDER ...
SOME LIGHT POWDER ...

I'M SO EXCITED! THIS IS GONNA BE GREAT!
Hmm
KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.

IT'S A WATER DEMON!
SOUNDS LIKE... WATER.
DO YOU HEAR THAT?

WOW!
WHAT A SIGHT!!

SAABEL!
LET'S GET HIM!!

IS THAT THE BEST YOUVE GOT?!
DAMN IT!
THE ARROWHEADS MADE FROM THE HOLY STONES HAD NO EFFECT!

WHAT?
I CAN'T MOVE!
DIDN'T YOU KNOW ...
...THAT YOUR STICKS AND STONES CAN'T HURT ME?

YOU BETTER TRY TO DODGE THEM!
NO! OUR HOLY STONES!
LORD NADIL WAS KIND ENOUGH TO GIVE ME SOME OF HIS POWER.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TRY A LOT HARDER THAN THAT IF YOU WANT TO BEAT ME.
OR PERHAPS YOU'D RATHER COME WITH ME?
I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ESCORT YOU TO THE SEA OF DEATH.

AND EVEN BE SO GENEROUS AS TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES...
...AND ALLOW YOU TO WORK FOR ME...
...AS ONE OF MY MECHANICAL DOLLS!!

TELL YOU WHAT...I'LL GIVE YOU TO THE COUNT OF ONE TO DECIDE.
THREE.
TWO.
ONE.
ZERO!

CAP-
TAIN!!
!!
YOU
AGAIN!

WHOA--!!
SUCH HYPER-BOLE...
YOU HAVE VIOLATED OUR SANCTUARY ENOUGH.
WAIT A MINUTE... WHY DIDN'T I NOTICE IT BEFORE?
I GET IT NOW.
THIS PLACE ...
IT'S THE DRAGON CLAN'S SANCTUARY.
WOW...

WELL, NOW THAT I KNOW THAT THIS IS SUCH A HOLY PLACE...
...IT JUST MAKES ME WANT TO COMPLETELY DESTROY IT EVEN MORE.
!!

GAAAH!!

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THIS SHAKING GETTING WORSE?
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WHOLE PLACE IS GONNA COME DOWN!
AND YET, THINK OF ALL THE TREASURES TO BE FOUND HERE.
BLAS-PHEMOUS!
THIS CASTLE IS STURDIER THAN YOU THINK.
BUT WE STILL HAVE TO HURRY AND FIND THAT DEMON AND HIS FISH!

HE WAS PLANNING ON TURNING US INTO ONE OF THESE GHOSTS!!
THIS IS WHAT THAT DEMON MEANT!!
THAT DIRTY LITTLE--!!
SLASH

CAPTAIN!
IF HE SUCCEEDS IN DESTROY-ING THE SANCTUARY, THEN THE HOLY STONES WILL...

WHAT WAS THAT?
DOES THAT MEAN THERE ARE MORE HOLY STONES DOWN THERE?
GARABA.
THIS IS REALLY GOING TO BE FAR TOO EASY.
SHALL I TURN YOUR PILLARS TO DUST?
OR SHOULD I JUST TURN GARABA LOOSE ON THE PLACE?

BY THE TIME HE'S DONE...
...EVERYTHING, INCLUDING YOUR HOLY STONES...
...WILL HAVE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.
BUT PERHAPS IT'D BE MORE FUN TO SAVE A FEW TRINKETS AS SOUVENIRS FOR LORD NADIL.

NO... YOU'RE WRONG.
I'VE UNLEASHED LORD NADIL'S POWER ON YOU-- AND NOTHING!
HOW CAN ONE OF THE DRAGON CLAN BE UNAFFECTED LIKE THAT?
WHAT?!
THAT'S ODD...
I SEE THAT YOU'VE BEEN INFUSED WITH NADIL'S POWER...
DEMON OF DEATH!

I SEE.
YOU'RE FAKING IT.
YOU'RE ONLY PRETENDING TO BE OKAY.
!
THERE IT IS!
THE FISH DEMON!

WHERE AM I?
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL...

EXCUSE ME!
SOMETHING'S...
...ODD.
HANG ON!
STOP!

WHAT?!
HEY YOU!!
mmph!
SORRY...!
There's an echo.
SHH!
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
DON'T EVEN BOTHER.
SURE. WHAT IS IT?
WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF BOOBY TRAPS THEY HAVE LAID OUT?
THIS IS ENEMY TERRITORY.
WE NEED TO BE CAUTIOUS

I KIND OF REMEMBER THE PLACE CESIA AND THE OTHERS TELEPORTED TO...
BUT I DON'T THINK THEY DESCENDED THIS FAR DOWN INTO THE CASTLE.
FROM THE LOOKS OF IT...
...IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE REALLY FAR UNDERGROUND.
ARE WE?
IGNORE HIM. HE'S JUST A FRAIDY CAT.
IT'S JUST THAT...
YES, WE ARE.
DUH!

YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M SURPRISED YOU NOTICED. SORRY, BUT WE HAVE TO STOP HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
WHAT FOR?
SOME ERRAND?
DON'T WORRY. IT WON'T TAKE LONG.
BESIDES, YOU SHOULDN'T WANDER AROUND WITHOUT ME. YOU'LL JUST WIND UP GETTING LOST.
HE CAN DETECT THINGS WE CAN'T EVEN SEE IN THE CASTLE..
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

THE GOLDEN DEMON FISH!
FINE. WHATEVER YOU SAY.
BUT DO TRY TO HURRY IT UP...!

SAABEL!!
A FAERIE!!

TINTLET...?!
STAY RIGHT THERE!
WHY AM I SO SCARED?!
WHY AM I SO AFRAID OF FAERIES?!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
UGH!
HUH?
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
!!.....
FAERIE PRINCESS !
...
HE'S GONNA OPEN THE DOOR!!

PRINCESS !!
YOU NEED TO LEAVE RIGHT AWAY. WHY ARE YOU MAKING HIM OPEN THAT DOOR?
LET GO OF ME! I HAVE TO DO THIS! IF I DON'T, WE'LL LOSE ONE OF THE DRAGON KNIGHTS
BUT I NEED TO CONTACT HIM. RIGHT NOW.
IF I END UP RELEASING SOMETHING ...
...
I'LL NEED YOU TO PROTECT US.

ポン…

WATER
DRAGON!

XXXXX.....
THERE SEEMS TO BE A STRANGER IN THE WATER REALM.
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
I SENSE IT, TOO.
IF YOU'RE REALLY THAT WORRIED ABOUT IT...
... WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO CHECK IT OUT?

IT MAKES ME WONDER IF SOMEONE HAS BEEN LIVING HERE.
IT WEIGHS MY LEGS DOWN.
I'VE NOTICED THAT THE WATER HAS GOTTEN THICK AND DARK.
THAT CROSSED MY MIND AS WELL...

LISTEN, XXXX..
THE WATER REALM CONNECTS THE FAERIE FORESTS TO EACH OTHER.
WE CANNOT ACCEPT DIFFERENT CREATURES INTO THIS WORLD.
IS THIS A DIFFERENT CREATURE?
IS THAT WHAT I'VE SENSED?
ゴオオオオオ

THE POWER OF WATER IS STRONG...AND SOOTHING.
PERHAPS IT IS A SIGN THAT THE MASTER OF THE WATER REALM IS SLUMBERING.
I THINK THIS STRANGER MAY BE THE MASTER OF THE WATER REALM.
?!

WHAT?

I WAS WRONG.
HE'S ALSO BEEN CAPTURED...
IT ISN'T THE MASTER.
IT'S NADIL'S HANDIWORK!
CAPTURED BY THE DEMON FISH.

THE
POWER OF
VIRTUE...

WITHOUT THE POWER OF VIRTUE, YOU CANNOT CONTROL THE DEMON FISH VARAWOO OR REVIVE THE WATER DRAGON...
YOU'RE JUST A USELESS EMPTY SHELL OF A DEMON.
THAT SAID, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.

IT'S A PIECE OF MY POWER...

AH...
?!
THIS...
SAABEL!
WHAT...?
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SCARED! YOU'VE MERELY BEEN PROGRAMMED TO BE SCARED OF ME!

.....!!
LIM KAANA!!
UH...
YES?
IF IT'S OKAY...
...I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK...!

WHAT WAS THAT?!
DON'T WORRY!!
I WON'T LET VARAWOOS POWER BE RELEASED...!!
RUNE!
PLEASE! LET ME HELP YOU!

フフ…
SAABEL!!

!!
HE'S FALLING!!
BE CAREFUL! WE DON'T WANT TO OPEN THE PORTAL TO THE FOREIGN WORLD!

cough! cough!
...IS ALREADY OPENING...
TOO BAD. THE PORTAL TO THE FOREIGN WORLD...
UGH...

DAMMIT!
WHAT WOULD FEDELTA SAY...
...IF HE SAW ME LIKE THIS?
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE WOULD SAY-- AND IT TICKS ME OFF!
SAABEL!!!
NO!!

TINTLET!!
PRINCESS ...
LET ME PUT HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY.
I THOUGHT HE COULDN'T BE AROUND FAERIES.
IT WILL ONLY MAKE HIM WEAKER.
STOP IT!
YOU SHOULDN'T TOUCH HIM!

SAABEL
...
LISTEN TO ME ...
YOU ARE A FAERIE.
YOU ARE A FAERIE UNDER THE SPELL OF A DEMON.

I HEARD THE ELDER FAERIE TALKING ABOUT IT.
YOU ARE A LEGEND FROM EVEN BEFORE RUNE AND MY TIME.
THERE IS A LEGEND OF A FAERIE WHO COULD HEAR THE VOICES OF THE WATER REALM.
BUT ONE DAY HE JUST SUDDENLY VANISHED.
TINTLET ...
IVE SEEN VISIONS ...
COULD IT BE TRUE ...?
!!!?
IN THEM I SEE MYSELF ... ... GETTING CAUGHT.
!!!?

A DEMON FISH AND LORD NADIL WERE THERE.
IS THIS A MEMORY?
!!!?
!!!?
...
I... SEE...
!!!?
!!!?
.....
HEH HEH ...
!!!?
YOU KNOW, SAABEL ...
I CAME TO THE FOREIGN WORLD JUST TO FIND YOU.
オオオオ
THAT'S TOO BAD.
I'M SORRY.

HOW IRONIC.
!!?
!!
YOU FIND ME...
...JUST AS I'M ABOUT TO LEAVE THIS WORLD.
HEH...
HUNH ...
UGH ...
URGH ...

HEY, FAERIE...
DRIP
DRIP
DAMN.
I'M IN SO MUCH PAIN.
I'M MAD THAT IT HAS TO END THIS WAY.
YOU BET-TER LET HIM GO.
HE'S NOT DOING VERY WELL.
SAA-BEL ...
DRIP
DRIP
I DIDN'T AWAKEN THE WATER DRAGON ALL ON MY OWN.
I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT TINTLET'S AND RATH'S POWER.

SAABEL!!
...!!
?!

WATER DRAGON!

RUNE!
...
RUNE
...

...
WHAT IS IT?
DID YOU COME HERE TO FINISH ME OFF?
SAABEL ...
YOU'RE ONE OF THE DRAGON CLAN, AND YET YOU STILL HAVE THE POWER OF VIRTUE.
WAIT.
SAABEL...
DON'T COME ANY CLOSER. IT'S TOO LATE, ANYWAY.
...
SAABEL...
WATER DRAGON!
...

THERE'S SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO SEE YOU.
IT'S WATER DRAGON.
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO AWAKEN HIM.
HE WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD ME YOU HAD RETURNED.
I'M SORRY...
... WATER DRAGON ...
IT'S TOO LATE.

IT'S ONE OF SHYRENDORA'S SPELLS!
CAPTAIN!
GET OUT OF HERE! IT'S DESIGNED TO KILL FAERIES!
THE WATER IS TURNING BLACK!
...!!
CAPTAIN!
NO!
THE PORTAL IS SHIFTING!
HUH?
WHAT NOW ?!
IF YOU DON'T, IT'LL CREATE MORE DEMONS!
WATER DRAGON! CAN YOU BREAK THE SPELL?!

WHAT COULD IT BE? A DEMON?
LOOK! IT'S OPENING!
AND SOMETHING'S COMING THROUGH!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
...!!

IT LOOKS LIKE A...
BUTTERFLY?!

I KNOW HER.
ITS...
...METE-AURA...
WHY HAS SHE RETURNED?
...PART OF MY POWER WAS TAKEN FROM ME.
ITS BECAUSE OF LORD NADIL...
YOUR WINGS...
THEY'RE...
...FAKE.
THEY'VE CHANGED.
THEY'VE BECOME WHITE, HAVEN'T THEY?
MY POWER OF VIRTUE...
...
...WAS CONTAMINATED.
WELL, ACTUALLY...

PLEASE..
SAY SOME-THING..
...
METEAURA..

HUH?
ABOUT WHAT?
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.

I HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE.
AND I CHOOSE TO MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE.
THE BLACK WATER...IT'S GONE!

BUT WHAT
NOW?

I'M NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED ...
...BUT IT SEEMS THAT THE WHITE BUTTERFLY THAT CAME THROUGH THE PORTAL DISAPPEARED INTO HIS BODY.
REALLY?
IT WENT INSIDE OF HIM?
フォォォ!

HE HASN'T MOVED SINCE THEN.
HE DOESN'T LOOK DEAD...
DO YOU THINK HE'S REALLY A FAERIE?
SAABEL...

THE THREAT OF THE BLACK WATER IS GONE.
BUT THE PORTAL IS STILL THERE.
DON'T WORRY. WE'LL KEEP WATCH OVER IT.
UH...
BY THE WAY...
...I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU, RUNE.
I THOUGHT YOU WENT TO THE FOREIGN WORLD. SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HOW'D YOU END UP HERE?
WELL?
I'M NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THAT MYSELF.
MAYBE IT HAS TO DO WITH WATER DRAGON'S POWER.
WHAT ABOUT THAT PORTAL--- CAN WE JUST USE THAT TO TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH?

TECHNICALLY, YES.
BUT ONLY IF YOU'RE A DEMON.
SO I'D RATHER NOT RISK IT.
OH, GREAT ...!
SO BASICALLY YOU'RE SAYING WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO DEMONS COMING THROUGH THAT THING?!
YES. AND SINCE IT OPENS UP INTO THE BASEMENT OF THE DRAGON CASTLE, EVERY DEMON IS GOING TO WANT TO COME THROUGH IT.
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF AN ENTIRE ARMY OF DEMONS SHOWED UP.
BUT ITS NOT JUST THAT...
I HAVE A VERY BAD FEELING THAT THERE'S SOMETHING FAR WORSE ON THE HORIZON.
WHY DO I FEEL THIS WAY?
IS VARAWOO TRYING TO WARN ME?
NO...ITS SOMETHING ELSE..

HE FEELS SORRY ABOUT WHAT IS ABOUT TO COME.

THE POWER OF VIRTUE CURED SAABEL MUCH FASTER THAN I HAD EXPECTED IT TO.
WE DIDN'T MANAGE TO KILL A SINGLE FAERIE!
IT WAS A COMPLETE FAILURE!
WE MAY HAVE LOST THE BATTLE, BUT THE WAR ISN'T OVER YET.
BESIDES, I'D SAY WE MAY BE AT A SLIGHT ADVANTAGE NOW.
HOW COULD THAT BE?
HAVE YOU CREATED ANOTHER DEMON IN ITS PLACE?
IT WOULD BE JUST LIKE YOU TO DO SUCH A THING...!

DON'T BE SO SHORT-SIGHTED.
THE WATER DRAGON HAS BROUGHT THE POWER OF VARAWOO INTO THE DRAGON CASTLE.
ALL THE ELEMENTS ARE UNITED...
... TOGETHER IN THE CASTLE.
VARAWOO, CARABA, AND THE PORTAL.
THE STAGE IS SET...
... FOR US TO RELEASE THE ULTIMATE DEMON.
NOTHING STANDS IN OUR WAY TO THE DRAGON CASTLE.
IT'S LIKE THEY'VE HANDED US THE KEY.

WE WILL SUMMON THE DEMON...
...AND PUT HIM SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DRAGON CASTLE.
!
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE EARTH IS SHIFTING...

IS THIS A FLOAT-ING CASTLE?
OR DO ITS WALLS SHIFT OR SOMETHING?
...
YOU SURE ARE QUIET.
AND YOU TALK TOO MUCH.
NO LAGGING.
IT'S JUST UP AHEAD.
WHO ARE YOU, REALLY?
WHAT?
I MEAN ...
... YOU'RE ASKING ME THAT NOW?

SOMETHING STINKS ABOUT THIS WHOLE SITUATION--AND I'M BEGINNING TO THINK IT'S YOU.
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?
BECAUSE I WILL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP YOU FROM GETTING IT!
IS THAT RIGHT?
YOU ACTUALLY THINK THAT YOU CAN FOIL MY PLANS?

ANALIS...

WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!
!!
WAIT!
I KNEW IT! I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, YOU GHOST!
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU'RE AFTER?!

ALL I WANTED WAS TO OBSERVE YOU...
... BIERREZ.
NOTHING MORE.
WHAT?
WHY ME?!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!
AND WHAT'S WITH YOUR NEW FORM?
CRAP
WE CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY!
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT ...
...THERE'S KIND OF A LARGE SNAKE BLOCKING OUR WAY!
IT'S SOME KIND OF SPELL. IT'S NOT REAL.
USE YOUR DRAGON POWER TO GET RID OF IT.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE ...!

OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE GHOST?!
EEK!

DON'T SNEAK UP ON ME LIKE THAT! JEEZ, YOUR HANDS ARE COLD!
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'VE NEVER TOUCHED ME BEFORE, HUH?
I CAN TOUCH YOU, SO YOU'RE REAL.
UM... DO YOU MIND?
DON'T YOU HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO?
AHHHH!!!

THAT'S RIGHT! I ALMOST FORGOT...!
I GOTTA HURRY UP AND GET OUTTA HERE!
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SAABEL, BUT IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO BE HANGING AROUND HERE!
TINTLET! COME ON, LET'S GO!
BUT, KITCHEL ...
WHERE ARE WE...?
!
カヒ

YOU TWO GUIDE KITCHEL TO THE DRAGON LORD.
YES, SIR!
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?
GOOD POINT.
NO, I DON'T.
IS IT FAR?
THERE'S AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE NEARBY.
IT'S HARD TO FIND, BUT IT'LL GET US THERE FASTER.
THE DRAGON LORD IS WITH THE QUEEN IN THE FOREST ANNEX.

.....?!
WE BETTER HURRY!
OH NO!
ANOTHER EARTH-QUAKE?!

YOUR KINGDOM SURE HAS A LOT OF EARTH-QUAKES.
THE STABILITY OF THE LAND DEPENDS ON THE DRAGON LORD'S CONDITION. WE NORMALLY HARDLY EVER HAVE EARTH-QUAKES.
.....
DON'T THINK LIKE THAT!
WHY WOULD OUR LORD CAUSE THE EARTH TO SHAKE?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE...
WAIT A MINUTE
THIS NOISE..
?!
I THINK IT'S COMING FROM UPSTAIRS!
!!
.....
Dragon Knights 13 END

DRAGON KNIGHTS

ドラゴン騎士団

Illustrations

My Life

By Mineko Ohkami

(A fan girl's reflection)
THE PERSON WHO WASN'T IN COLOR.
WOW...HERE WE ARE AT VOLUME 23. IT'S BEEN A LONG, HARD RACE TO THE FINISH LINE, BUT I'M ALMOST THERE. I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN, AND THAT I WILL TRY REALLY HARD TO MAKE IT TO THE END!
Whoa...I'm sorry...!

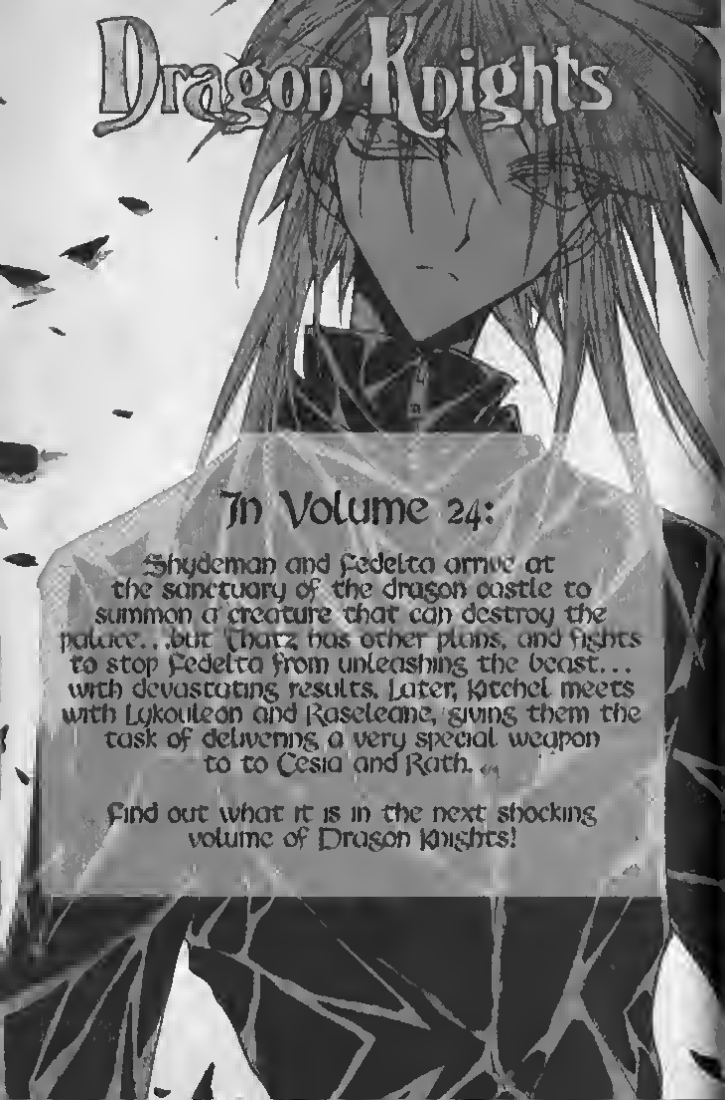
I'VE GOT MORE CATS.
THIS ONE
(A CAT THAT LIKES OTHER CATS.)
HER TAIL IS SHORT AND DOESN'T BEND--SO IT LOOKS LIKE A MATCHSTICK.
A HAPPY, SMILING FACE. SHE HAS A BIT DOUBLE CHIN.
IN FACT, IT SPINS LIKE A PROPELLER.
SOFT EARS.
LONG LEGS.
STRANGE WHISKERS ON AN ARMY
HERE'S A PURE-BRED, JAPANESE FEMALE CALICO CAT. HER NAME IS RICA.
I NAMED HER RICA SINCE IT CAME FROM GUNMA PREFECTURE. (RICA IS THE NICKNAME OF A FORMER TOP STAR FROM TSUKI GUMI, TAKARAZUKA.) (NOTE: TAKARAZUKA IS AN OPERA COMPANY IN JAPAN.)

PICTURES OF THESE CATS CAN BE FOUND ON MINEKO OHKAMI'S HOME PAGE (HTTP://NEKO.G-COM.NE.JP/MINEKO/).

THE CALICO'S FOOT PADS ARE THREE COLORS. A BLACK PAD LOOKS LIKE A BLACK BEAN--WHICH LOOKS DELICIOUS!

NEXT UP IS VOLUME 24. A SIDE STORY IS ABOUT TO END (LAUGH). UP UNTIL NOW, I BROKE IT UP INTO CHAPTERS AND DREW STORIES WITH LIMITED CHARACTERS. NOW THAT ALL THE CHARACTERS ARE APPEARING, I'M FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO PUT TOGETHER SOMETIMES.
OH WELL....SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

My Life End



In Volume 24:

Shydeman and Fedelta arrive at the sanctuary of the dragon castle to summon a creature that can destroy the palace...but Thatz has other plans, and fights to stop Fedelta from unleashing the beast... with devastating results. Later, Krehel meets with Lykouleon and Raseleane, giving them the task of delivering a very special weapon to to Cesia and Rath.

Find out what it is in the next shocking volume of Dragon Knights!